



New England Fishery Management Council

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Scallops: Council Approves 2022-2023 RSA Priorities; Initiates Framework 34; Responds to Letter on Leasing Petition

During its [June 2021 webinar meeting](#), the New England Fishery Management Council adopted 2022-2023 research priorities to help steer the development of the next round of projects to be funded through the Atlantic Sea Scallop Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. Resource surveys were identified by the Council as the highest priority, as has been the case for several years running.

This year, the Council expanded the range of potential projects under its high priority category by:

- Broadening the scope of research that can be proposed under the scallop biology priority; and
- Expanding the turtle priority to cover gear research and ecological studies, which were identified as [Reasonable and Prudent Measures](#) in the new [Biological Opinion](#) for the scallop fishery.

The Council also identified three categories of important general research projects, which are noted in the table below. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS/NOAA Fisheries) is expected to publish the Notice of Funding Opportunity for 2022-2023 awards this summer. NOAA Fisheries administers the RSA award competition and oversees selected projects, as well as set-aside harvest activities. The awards are based on the Council's identified RSA priorities.

In recent years, the Council has been setting aside 1.25 million pounds of scallops annually to fund research through the RSA program.

The set-aside amount for 2022-2023 is expected to increase to 1.275 million because an additional 25,000 pounds will be added to account for a contribution from the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) Management Area once [Amendment 21](#) to the scallop fishery management plan is implemented.

2022-2023 Scallop Research Set-Aside (RSA) Priorities At-A-Glance

#	HIGHEST PRIORITY (1a, 1b, 1c – equal priority)	#	GENERAL RESEARCH (4, 5, & 6 – equal priority)
1a	Intensive surveys of access areas	4	Scallop recruitment supplementation
1b	Intensive surveys of areas of interest and Gulf of Maine	5	Bycatch: small scallops and non-target species
1c	Broadscale surveys of Georges Bank and Mid-Atlantic	6	Gear: commercial dredge research
	HIGH PRIORITY (2 & 3 – equal priority)		 Coonamessett Farm Foundation photo
2	Research on scallop biology		
3	Sea turtle research		



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Framework Adjustment 34

The Council also initiated Framework Adjustment 34. This framework, which will be developed throughout the summer and fall, includes:

- Specifications for the 2022 fishing year and default measures for the 2023 fishing year;
- Potential modifications to the limited access general category individual fishing quota (LAGC IFQ) access area trip limit counting system; and
- Measures from Amendment 21 that are approved by NMFS.

Scallop Leasing

Lastly, the Council signed off on its official response to a [letter](#) seeking input on a [petition](#) to NMFS from the Scallopers Campaign. The petition requested that NMFS take secretarial action to implement a scallop leasing program. The agency asked the Council to consider the merits of the petition, address its claims, and look at the benefits and drawbacks of a leasing program.

The Council concluded that the petition does not have merit and that the Council is the appropriate body to lead changes to the scallop plan. The Council further noted that it will begin its discussion on 2022 work priorities in September and will consider: (1) adding scallop leasing listening sessions to the list for 2022; and (2) potentially adding a multi-year priority to develop a leasing program for the limited access scallop fishery. Details are spelled out in the Council's response letter to NOAA Fisheries, which will be sent to the agency shortly.

Time Sensitive! Contractor Wanted to Help with Evaluation of Rotational Management Program for Scallop Fishery

The Council is seeking the services of an independent contractor to help conduct an evaluation of the rotational management program used in the scallop fishery. This undertaking is one of the Council's 2021 scallop work priorities. The evaluation will focus on two questions:

- Has the rotational management program achieved the primary objectives identified in Amendment 10 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan? And,
- Is the current approach to rotational management working?

The application deadline is [July 6, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.](#) Here is the [Request for Proposals](#).



*All documents used during the Council's June 22, 2021 scallop discussion are available [HERE](#) and under the [Atlantic Sea Scallop Biological Opinion](#) agenda item. **Questions?** Contact Jonathon Peros, the Council's scallop plan coordinator, at (978) 465-0492 ext. 117, jperos@nefmc.org.*